'THE MUSICAL PILGRIM'

Edited by Dr. Arthur Somervell

Bach's Keyboard Suites

by J. A. Fuller-Maitland

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The Keyboard Suites *of* J. S. BACH

by J. A. Fuller-Maitland

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I. *The Suite-Form*

The plan of grouping a number of short musical pieces into a 'suite' would not seem to require much explanation, but some writers have taken great pains to gain popularity for their theory that at some time or other in the eighteenth century a number of German musicians of cosmopolitan tastes settled upon a certain succession of dance-tunes, choosing them to illustrate the characteristics of various nationalities. Thus the serious nature of the German was represented by the 'Allemande', the fire of the Italian by the 'Courante' or 'Coranto', the romantic gloom of the Spaniard by the Sarabande, the gaiety of the Frenchman by the Gavotte, the Bourrée, and the Minuet, and the mirth of the English by the Jig. It is tacitly implied that the process was conscious and deliberate, but in fact the history of the form is less straightforward than this. For its origin we must go back to the sixteenth century, when we find the custom well established of grouping dances in pairs, called Pavans and Galliards respectively. In the English Virginal books there are a large number of these pairs of dances; many of the couples are on the same theme, and all in the same key. Johann Ghro issued a book of *Paduanen und Galliards* in 1604, and it is quite certain that the practice of arranging dances in couples was widespread and lasting; for down to the time of Jane Austen we find references to the custom, and these are made in a way that shows it to have been usual enough to need no word of explanation. 'She stood up with him for the next pair of

dances' is a phrase of frequent occurrence in her novels, though whether the contrast between the measure of the two dances was still preserved we are not told. This contrast was the chief characteristic of the older pairs of dances, the Pavan being stately and in quadruple time, while the Galliard was in triple time and of a livelier measure.

Although these actual dance-forms were no longer in use when the great suites were composed, yet the idea of contrast, and of a regular uniformity of sequence, no doubt subsisted, and bore witness to the parentage of the Suite as we know it in Bach. Identity of key, too, was considered essential, although occasionally an excursion was made in the 'trio' of the minuet or kindred pieces to the relative minor, or to the tonic major of a minor key. This convention had a fairly distant ancestry, for it was in the days of the lute that it arose. Collections of songs with lute accompaniment are nearly always found to be arranged so that a group of songs in one key is followed by a group in another key; a certain amount of retuning was required if the key was changed, so that there was a very practical reason for the fashion, from which even Bach did not feel justified in departing, although in his other works he is evidently fully aware of the relief to the ear that is felt when a new movement introduces a new tonality.

From the earliest groups of pieces to which the name Suite was applied, down to the days of the crowning achievement of Bach, certain movements were treated as fixed points, and their order was seldom or never changed. These were the Allemande, the Courante, and the Sarabande. In John Blow's fourth suite, and in William Croft's first, the Sarabande precedes the Courante, but the very great

majority of suites before Bach preserve the usual arrangement. Some composers of suites occasionally left out one or other of these three chief movements; in fact, Handel very seldom has all three; but the order, when all are present, is nearly always the same.[1]

The ALLEMANDE. Considerably before the date when artistic music began in Germany, the 'Alman' was in general use as a dance. The *N. E. D.* gives a quotation from *The Complaynt of Scotland*, 1549, in which the 'almain haye' is described as 'the dance of all Christian men'. In a later quotation from Cotgrave, 1611, the fairly common phrase 'an almain- or almond-leape' is defined as 'trois pas et un saut'. This hardly agrees with Morley's description of the Alman as 'a more heauie daunce than this [the Galliard] (fitlie representing the nature of the people, whose name it carieth), so that no extraordinarie motions are vsed in the dauncing of it. It is made of strains, sometimes two, sometimes three, and euerie straine is made by foure, but you must marke that the foure of the pauan measure is in *dupla* proportion to the foure of the *Alman* measure.'[2] In Morley's days the Alman generally began on the first beat of the bar (there is one instance in the Fitzwilliam

[1] In Bach, the order of these fixed points is constant, alike in the suites for keyboard and in those for other instruments. Two of the three 'Partitas' for violin solo have all three in the usual positions, and the third has little besides the 'Galanterien', though it ends with a Gigue. The six suites for violoncello solo are on the same pattern, and all begin with preludes and end with gigues. The orchestral suites or 'overtures' are less formal in arrangement; none have Allemandes, that in C has a Courante, and that in B minor a Sarabande, but, in the rest, the lighter movements prevail; all have preludes. In a suite for harpsichord and violin we find the Courante separated from the Sarabande by an 'entrée' and a 'rondeau', while there is no Allemande.

[2] *Introduction to Practicall Musicke*, p. 181.

Virginal Book where a single semiquaver anticipates the first beat), but later the first beat was always preceded by one or three semiquavers.

The COURANTE or CORRENTE. The two forms of the name, which was originally 'Coranto', are held by Spitta and others to indicate two very different types of movements in Bach's suites. Thus 'Corrente' is applied (not always by Bach himself) to the simpler 'Italian' form, in which the quavers run on continuously in three-four time. The French form of the word, Courante, implies a more highly organized type in which 3/2 and 6/4 rhythms are found side by side and sometimes in beautiful collision. It is hardly fanciful to describe Brahms's Capriccio in C sharp minor, Op. 76, No. 3, as a glorified Courante.

The SARABANDE. The Spanish contribution to the suite provides the grave, fiery dignity that is a relief among the gayer movements. Yet rhythmically, it is in some sort the counterpart of the ancient Galliard, just as the Allemande has a good deal of the character of the Pavan.

The GIGUE. Next in importance to the three fixed points we have considered comes the Gigue, the name of which was used in French in two ways, implying a double derivation. Its first use was as the name of an instrument of the violin family, from which the German Geige was derived. In course of time the word in French became obsolete, and it is quite certainly not the source of our English word 'jig', which is always used of a dance, or of music accompanying such a dance. There is little doubt that our own word is the origin of the later French word 'gigue', as the name of a dance. Handel uses the form 'Jigg' like the English composers of the virginal period, and we need not hesitate to claim the type as the English

contribution to the suite-form. Its position as the closing movement of very nearly all the suites in which it occurs is more uniform than its measure, for instances are found of 3/8, 3/4, 6/8, 9/8, 12/8, 9/16, 24/16, and even quadruple time. Like the Courante and other movements already mentioned, the Gigue is generally in two sections, each being repeated.

Into this framework of the suite were introduced several shorter pieces, called 'Intermezzi' or 'Galanterien', consisting of dance-movements taken from French forms, such as the MINUET, the GAVOTTE, the BOURRÉE, and the PASSEPIED. The first and last of these were for the most part in triple time, the others always in duple common time, with this difference, that the Bourrée begins with the last crotchet of the bar while the Gavotte should always begin at the half-bar. These movements were very often provided with what was called an 'alternativo', or in later times a 'trio', that is, a short piece contrasted in style, though not always in key, and implying a repetition of the main dance after it. In the case of the Gavotte and Bourrée, the 'alternativo' is often in the 'musette' style, that is, on a held or repeated tonic bass in imitation of the drone of the 'Musette' or bagpipe.

The orthodox place for these Intermezzi was immediately before the Gigue, and with the ARIA, a short movement in square time, sometimes, as in the Partitas, preceding the Sarabande, the scheme was complete, all but the PRELUDE, which ranged from a mere flourish such as we find in Handel and many of the earlier suite-writers, up to the glorious compositions with which Bach crowned the structure of the 'English Suites', and which represent the highest point to which instrumental design of that

kind ever reached. The presence of a Prelude was optional; there is none, for example, in the 'French Suites'.

Soon after the death of Bach, the suite-form was superseded by the nobler form called the Sonata, and there are few suites of importance after this date. Even before that, the pattern above described was sometimes very loosely imitated, and Couperin's 'Ordres' show little or no conformity with the usual type, being pieces of varying number, with or without obvious reference to the different accepted forms, but all provided with fancy names. Some were undoubtedly meant to be played in succession, as the names have some connexion; but many are quite independent. Domenico Scarlatti called his hundreds of short movements 'Sonatas', and the word 'suite' was not applied to them as meaning groups of pieces, although Roseingrave entitles his collection of 42 Scarlatti sonatas, 'Forty-Two Suits of Lessons'; it may have been this use of the term which led von Bülow to arrange 18 of the 'sonatas' into something more or less like the suite-form, and it is to be regretted that the monumental edition of Signor Longo has followed his example, grouping the pieces according to uniformity of key, but with little more resemblance to the true suite-structure. Of course, many modern composers have written what they call suites, some with deliberate adoption of the old style, and others with so loose an adaptation of the accepted forms that they have little or nothing in common with the form as used by Bach.

Bach wrote 23 complete suites for harpsichord, and besides these there are two fragmentary works in the form, one or two arranged from violin compositions, and various single movements, mostly allemandes and

minuets. There are also two suites of doubtful authenticity, included in the appendix to vol. xlii (i) of the great edition of the *Bach-Gesellschaft*. These will be discussed in detail in the following chapters, and here it may be well to say that one and all are intended to be played on the harpsichord; they do not require the special sensitiveness and tone-gradation of the clavichord, but demand the strong contrasts of the harpsichord, and all have a certain element of display, rather than the intimate emotional power that is characteristic of the 'Wohltemperirtes Clavier' or the 'Chromatic Fantasia'. The inner connexion between the movements of a suite is decidedly less than that between the movements of a sonata, and while it may seem to savour a little of vandalism to perform in public a single movement from one of the sonatas of a later day, no blame could attach to the performance of separate movements of a suite.

II. *The 'French' Suites*

(*Bach-Gesellschaft*, xiii and xlv (i); Peters, 2,748; Bischoff, vol. ii.)

The name by which these six compositions are known was not bestowed by Bach himself. In one of the autograph sources of the pieces, the title stands 'Sex Suiten pur le Clavesin compossee par Mos. J. S. Bach', and the appearance of some of the suites of the set in a book made by or for Bach's second wife, Anna Magdalena, shows that they were written for her special delectation. As the book is dated 1722, we know that the bulk of the suites were written

before that date. Some words which appear on the title-page, 'anti-Calvinismus und Christen-Schule, item anti-Melancholicus', are interpreted, as Sir Hubert Parry tells us, 'as a little hit at the unsympathetic attitude of the Pietists towards music'. Later investigations have shown that the words are merely a memorandum of three books by one G. Pfeifer which Bach intended to buy, and which were found in his possession at his death. Parry goes on: 'There is something specially attractive about the idea of Bach's making this collection of pieces for his wife to play, and the spirit of the works seems to suggest the tenderest and most loving relations between them, for the contents consist mainly of five of the groups of pieces known to the world in later times as the French Suites.'[1] The first suite, and part of the second, appear again in the later book also belonging to Anna Magdalena (dated 1725).

It has often been debated why the pieces acquired their collective title, and Spitta supposes that a certain affinity between them and some suites by Georg Böhm, who was strongly influenced by French art, may have been the reason; but this would appear almost too far-fetched an explanation. The suites are no doubt lighter in quality than the other sets, and as lightness was a characteristic of all French art (according to the Germans), the name may have been given as a kind of nickname by Bach's children, as seems to have happened again in the case of the 'English' Suites. The two names probably hang together, and were at first used merely as a handy way of distinguishing the two sets.

The English and French Suites were published in vol. xiii of the *Bach-Gesellschaft* edition, but the

[1] Parry, *J. S. Bach*, p. 139.

manner in which they were edited left so much to be desired that they were re-issued, together with sundry other works, in vol. xlv (i), and are there furnished with careful and trustworthy information. A comparison of these two versions with the editions of Peters [1] and Bischoff [2] shows that there was not much variety in the text itself; the number and position of the usual ornaments, or 'agréments' as they were called, varies very considerably, and we may guess that their use, even in the days when the harpsichord alone was available for their performance, was largely a matter of individual taste. On the pianoforte very few are necessary or desirable.

No. 1 in D minor

The opening Allemande (for these Suites have no preludes), with its dignified and flowing strains, is a fine test of phrasing, and should on no account be taken too fast. Like the rest of the movements, it is in two sections, each directed to be repeated. On the harpsichord such repetition was by no means vain, for it was the established tradition that the second time was to be contrasted with the first by the use of different stops. The Courante keeps to the rhythm of three minims to the bar, but in the last bar of each section there is a hint of the measure called 6/4. The Sarabande is 'in a vein of acute yearning and passionate intensity which must be admitted to have an element of deep sadness in it'.[3] There is a very beautiful touch at the beginning of the second part, where the melody of the opening is taken as a bass,

[1] Peters, ed. 2,748.
[2] Bischoff's edition (Steingräber), vol. ii.
[3] Parry, p. 140.

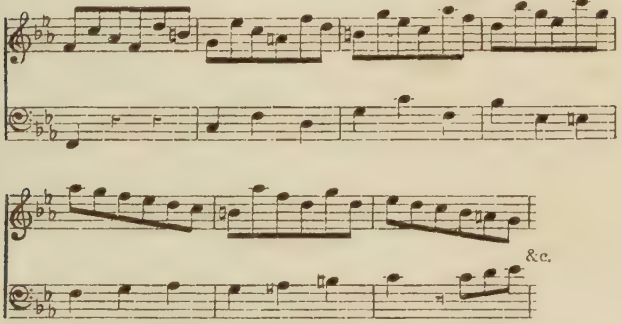
giving a prevailing dominant harmony instead of the former tonic. Much the same device adorns the second part of the first Minuet, and perhaps there is no point at which Bach's supremacy is more wonderfully displayed than in the openings of the second parts of his suite-movements. Just as Beethoven's mastery is most clearly to be seen at the corresponding point, the beginning of the 'working-out' section of his larger movements, so the older master exhibits here, not merely the ease and naturalness of his technical accomplishment, but the wealth of emotional power which has won the love of all educated musicians. The first part of Minuet 1 has an appoggiatura before its last note; this should be a B natural, and should be held for a full crotchet. At the 9th bar of the second part, the E natural of the middle voice against the E flat of the treble is right as given in Peters and by Bischoff; it has been 'improved' in the *Bach-Gesellschaft* edition. The Gigue is very unusual, as it is in common time, with the 'dotted' rhythm that is generally associated with the form known as that of the French overture. It opens fugally, and the theme is never unheard for very long in one position or another. In this movement the semiquavers should certainly be very short, in what was sometimes called the 'galant' manner.

No. 2 in C minor

The Allemande of the second Suite depends for its coherence upon the quaver figure in the bass, which should therefore be very carefully phrased and made comparatively prominent. A copy made by Gerber has a shortened variant of the end of the Allemande, quoted in Bischoff's foot-notes. The

Courante, which is more accurately a 'corrente', has the continuous quavers of the Italian type; from bar 14 of the second section there are no fewer than four distinct variants occupying the space between that bar and the seventh bar from the end. In Anna Magdalena's earlier book (1722) the passage stands [Ex. A], and in her second book (1725) it is clear that the composer wished to give more interest and point to the left-hand part as well as to extend

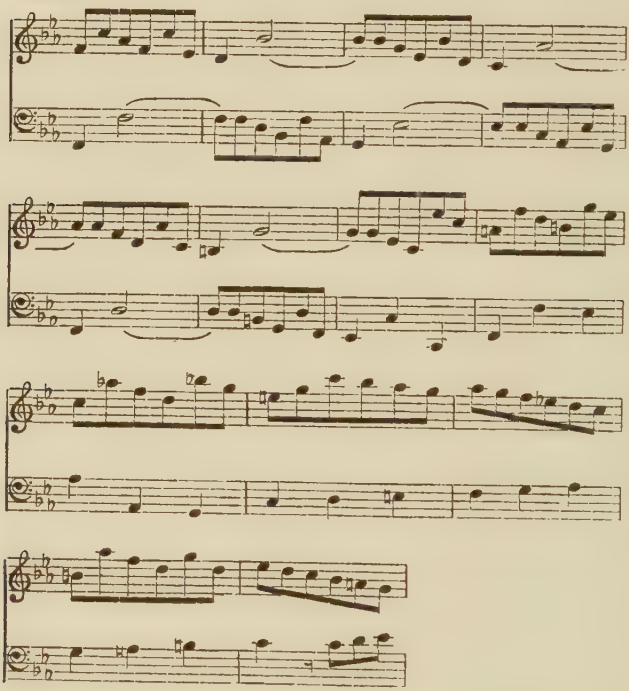
Ex. A.



the number of bars [Ex. B]. The upward leap in the second bar of this example is still further extended in the 'Gerber' transcript [Ex. C], and the little sequence with the mordent is the distinctive feature of the version of the so-called Rust-Wagner autograph, which is preferred in the Peters and Bischoff editions. The latter gives all the variants, and so does the *Bach-Gesellschaft*. It is impossible for us in the present day to be quite sure which of the three later versions represents Bach's mature decision, but the transition from the far less interesting reading of the wife's first book to that of her second is most

instructive to students, and illustrates well the master's infinite capacity for taking pains. The Sarabande is not particularly expressive or interesting, but the

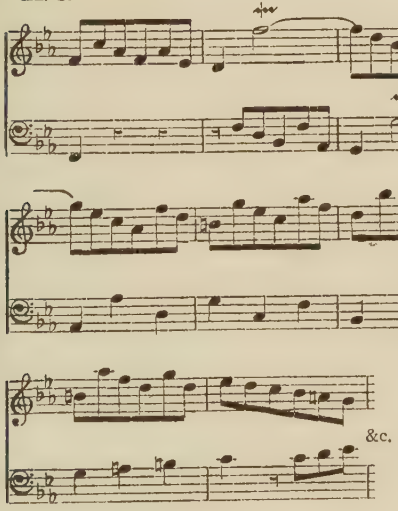
Ex. B.



succeeding Air is very graceful, and is an instance of Bach's skill in making two parts sound quite full. The flow of the Minuet is much increased if the little grace-note (F) between the G and F of the seventh bar, and the appoggiatura at the beginning

of the last bar but one, are retained and carefully observed. The little 'Trio' given in *Bach-Gesellschaft* xxxvi. 236 carries on the same movement of regular quavers, and there is nothing to suggest that the Minuet is meant to be played again after it; its omission in most of the manuscripts and in the editions

Ex. C.



of Peters and Bischoff is not to be regretted. The Gigue has a persistent rhythm of a semiquaver and a quaver preceding a dotted quaver, the last being on the first of the bar. It opens with a 'tonal' imitation at the fifth below, but the second part of the movement starts with an inversion of theme imitated at the octave. Bar 10 before the end has a variant of no great importance in the bass passage

(accepted by Bischoff), and the last two complete bars begin with an appoggiatura which, if played according to Türk's [1] rule, relieves the monotony of the insistent rhythm; the first is an F which must be held for a whole quaver, and the second in like manner for a whole crotchet, as both the main notes are dotted, and therefore lose two-thirds of their apparent value. The interest of the second suite is not as great as that of its companions.

No. 3 in B minor

The third French Suite begins with a reversal of the process just described, for the imitation between the two voices of the Allemande is at the octave in the first part and at the fifth (inverted) in the second. The whole suite gives colour to the theory—rather a fanciful one, perhaps—that the key of B minor was Bach's

[1] It has often been questioned whether the rules concerning the interpretation of the appoggiatura tabulated in Türk's treatise, *Klavierschule oder Anweisung zum Klavierspielen*, &c. (1789) can be taken as strictly applying to Bach; but although the treatise is of comparatively late date, yet it undoubtedly embodies the teaching of C. P. E. Bach, and there is no doubt that the same rule was followed in Quantz's flute treatise (1752), and by Marpurg in his *Die Kunst das Clavier zu spielen* (1750), both of which are so near Bach's date that it is only reasonable to assume that what was an accepted convention in their day must have been recognized in Bach's time; for if they either invented it, or modified an older rule, they would have laid more stress upon its execution than they do. See, on the whole question, Dannreuther's book on Ornamentation. It seems likely, as Spitta says, that Bach, in his music for the Church, preferred to write out the notes as they were to be sung; but it is probable that in compositions, such as the Suites, the 30 Variations, the Italian Concerto, &c., intended for performance by finished virtuosi, he would follow the conventions to which they were accustomed.

special favourite. The Courante is of the highly developed form with which the French name is associated; in the penultimate bar of the first part, and again in the second and fifth bars of the second part, we find the delightful cross-rhythm, or rather ambiguity of rhythm, which gives this form its special character. We may almost fancy it to be a humorous touch that the same kind of ambiguity occurs at the beginning of the Sarabande, as well as in several other places in the movement, for it is impossible that a listener without the music before him should not for a moment take the opening phrase as in 6/8 time instead of 3/4. In the third bar from the end, the *Bach-Gesellschaft* edition is no doubt right in reading the first of the second group of semiquavers as G sharp; the B which appears in the Peters edition and in Bischoff's text has probably been substituted for the other in order to avoid the false relation with the last note of the same group. After the deep emotional power of this movement, the even flow of the Minuet comes with wonderful charm; bar 8 of the second part has E for the 5th quaver of the left hand, given by Bischoff on the authority of three manuscripts; the bass of the last eight bars exists in two forms, but that in the Peters edition and in that of Bischoff is the more interesting. The second Minuet or 'Trio' is more expressive than the first, and requires to be taken at a rather slower pace; the first is, of course, repeated after it. In one of the manuscripts there occurs another 'second minuet' or 'trio' instead of this one; it is a transposed version (from C minor to B minor) of the tenth of the 'Petits Préludes pour les Commençants'. The 'Anglaise', called a Gavotte in one of the manuscripts, appears before the Minuets in another, as in Bischoff's edition, but its proper

place would seem to be before the Gigue, as it separates two movements in triple time. Eight bars before the end the last note of the bass is B in the majority of the manuscripts; but the D which appears in some has the merit of avoiding consecutive octaves between the extreme parts. The Gigue has a gait so nearly identical with that of the Minuet as to lose some of its effectiveness, and it is curious to notice that its plan of imitation is the same as that of the Allemande, the first part being imitated at the octave below, the second at the fifth. At bar 19 of the second part Bischoff gives A as the last note of the left hand (of course without the tie to the G of the next bar), so as to make the imitation more exact.

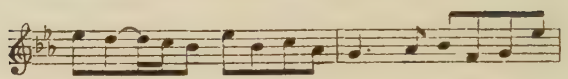
No. 4 in E flat

In one of the manuscripts in the Berlin Royal Library the fourth French Suite begins with a 'Prelude', and contains a second Gavotte, as well as the Minuet which appears in the Peters and Bischoff editions, though not in the main text of the suites as given in the *Bach-Gesellschaft* edition. (The additions are in vol. xxxvi.) It has been held by some writers that this prelude was rejected as breaking the uniformity of pattern, since the suites of the set have no preludes; but if this piece is really by Bach—which I take leave to doubt—it is of considerably less interest and value than most of those preludes which are founded on a conventional arpeggio figure. The chords marked 'arpeggio' should be taken upwards and downwards like those in the 'Chromatic Fantasia'. The additional Gavotte, too, is not well contrasted with the Gavotte in the suite proper, but the Minuet is too good to be lost or ignored. The

Peters edition of the whole suite is a good deal better than either of those in the *Bach-Gesellschaft* or than that of Bischoff.

The Allemande with its flowing semiquavers is worthy of special study, particularly for the manner in which the broken arpeggio figure

is made to serve both melodically and harmonically. The frequent divergences of reading between the Peters and the Bischoff editions are of slight importance. The Courante, with a 3/4 signature, is really a Corrente in 9/8, for the only exception to this rhythm is the very first note. It is worth reminding the student that the groups, mostly in the left-hand part, which are printed as a dotted quaver followed by a semiquaver, are to be played as a crotchet and a quaver, so as to correspond exactly with the first and third notes of the triplets. It would be a piece of absurd pedantry to treat them as if they were in opposition to the triplets, as they might be in modern music; the convention was fully understood in Bach's time, and authorities are unanimous on this point. The Sarabande is simple and very expressive; note the way the parts are interchanged. The 'mordents' on the minims of the upper part may with advantage be left out, as they do not make the identity of the figure any clearer when it occurs in other parts; if they are played they must be taken very quietly. Both parts of the Gavotte have direct imitation at the octave, and the direction 'scherzando' in the Peters edition gives the clue to its character. The treble of (complete) bars 4 and 5 stands in the

Bach-Gesellschaft and Bischoff editions as

which is rather easier of comprehension and more in keeping with the rest than the reading of the Peters edition. The Minuet, which, as stated above, is found in one of the later manuscripts, is a charming little movement. In the second bar of the second part the first note of the bass should probably be D, not B flat; the former is given in the *Bach-Gesellschaft* edition.

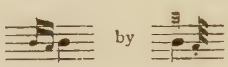
The Air, though light in style, is a beautiful example of form, alike in the structure of its second part with a kind of 'working-out' and return to the original strain, and in the ingenuity of the imitations, for this device is adopted here, though it is generally confined to the dance-measures of the suites. At first the descending scale is imitated at the octave below, but the second part has the figure inverted and imitated at the seventh below. The Gigue, which, by the way, has more orthodox inversions and imitations (first part direct, at the fourth above, second part, inverted at the fifth below), has a delicious elfin gaiety; and no English lover of Bach will play it less well for remembering the song, 'Oh dear! what can the matter be?' though there is little or no identity of notes.

No. 5 in G

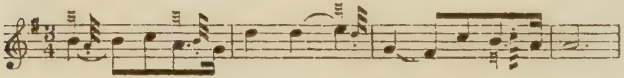
Of the fifth French Suite Sir Hubert Parry has said, 'It may be doubted if Bach ever wrote a work more completely serene, happy, and sparkling. The pure murmuring beauty of the Allemande, the gay

rush of the Courante, the dignified strength of the Sarabande, the sparkling vivacity of the Gavotte and the Bourrée (which has made the first one of Bach's most popular little movements), the truly wonderful and innocent tenderness of the Loure, and the supreme merriment and animation of the Gigue, make the whole series one of the most perfect little works of art in grouping, texture, spirit, and artistic finish ever produced by J. S. Bach.' So gracious is the gait from first to last, so easily grasped is the meaning, that very little is wanted by way of detailed commentary. The key-plan of all the movements is the same, and the second part of each, whether inverted or direct, always leads from the dominant to the tonic. The Allemande has irresistible grace and winning charm; the Courante has not the conflicting rhythm associated with the French type, but proceeds on its joyous course without interruption. The dignity which Parry speaks of in the Sarabande is very greatly enhanced if the ornaments are played, and if Türk's rule be strictly followed. In transferring harpsichord music to the modern piano, there is naturally some distaste for the multiplicity of little trills and mordents, which tend to obscure, so it is held, the course of the melody. When these are played on the harpsichord, one is hardly conscious of the three little taps caused by the two auxiliaries and the main note; but on the pianoforte they are unpleasantly noticeable. In rapid movements the 'rattle' does not so much matter, but in such places as this Sarabande, they are apt to become rather distracting to the hearer; yet if they are left out altogether, some of the character is lost. I find that it is a good plan to emphasize the main note and hold it down with a cantabile touch, striking the auxiliary note staccato and very softly,

immediately afterwards. In other words to replace

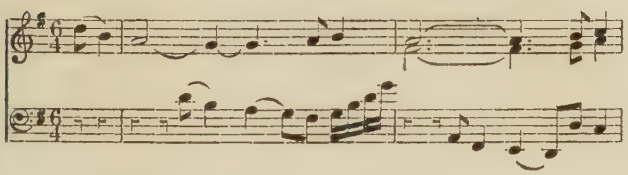


and trust to the sustaining power of the pianoforte to keep the main note sounding on after the auxiliary note has ceased. This gives the nearest possible approach to the harpsichord effect. The full length of the appoggiaturas gives great beauty to the flow of the melody. In the second bar it is true that to prolong the appoggiatura before the E to the prescribed length makes fifths with the tenor part; but there is every reason to suppose that appoggiaturas were regarded as outside the harmony, and therefore as free from such prohibitions. The first four bars of the Sarabande will therefore be played as follows:



The utmost care must be taken to play the auxiliary notes, here represented by demisemiquavers, almost as softly as possible. The Gavotte is such a perfect thing that it might be taken as the type of all that a Gavotte should be; the Bourrée is apt to lose distinctness of outline if the ornaments are played, and yet the longer trill in the first complete bar, and corresponding places, must be given, probably as a shake; it is quite pardonable to leave out the mordent on the first note of bars 1 and 5. In one of the manuscripts the next movement, the Loure, in 6/4 time, is oddly named 'Bourrée II', which one would think must be due to a clerical error. The

name, which is obviously allied to *lourd*, is that of a dance with a slide in it, as *lourer* is 'to slur'. Here the strict application of Türk's rule gives the following enchanting form to the opening



and must be applied all through the movement. Of the exquisite Gigue, Forkel makes the curious statement that 'only consonant intervals, especially thirds and sixths are used', which is hardly accurate. By its humour and buoyant gaiety, this Gigue rounds off the picture which the suite so unconsciously gives us of Bach's nature as it must have appeared in his quiet, uneventful home life. Where else but in Shakespeare do we find such a union of passionate emotion, unbridled mirth, and deep thought?

No. 6 in E

The last of the French Suites is especially rich in 'intermezzi', for four little pieces are found between the Sarabande and the Gigue. In the 'Gerber' MS. the Prelude in the same key from part I of the Wohltemperirtes Clavier (No. 9) is prefixed to this suite. The Allemande is of special interest on account of its form; at the eighth complete bar the even flow of semiquavers in the right hand ceases, and there is a regular cadence to the dominant, but there, while the semiquaver figure passes to the left hand,

the right hand has a new figure, and this new figure assumes great importance in the second part. It is hardly too fanciful to see here a foreshadowing of the 'binary' form which is the leading characteristic of the classical sonatas. The Courante, with a regular succession of semiquavers, has a number of bars in what is virtually a single part; and the whole movement suggests that it may have been intended for unaccompanied violin. The last note of the 11th bar in the left hand should probably be E (*Bach-Gesellschaft* and Bischoff), not D sharp (Peters). The exquisite expressiveness of the Sarabande is much enhanced if we adopt the reading of the best manuscripts in bar 5, where the alto part has D instead of E for its first note, descending to C sharp, a minim held with the E (so in Bischoff). In like manner, the grace and vivacity of the Gavotte are increased if a suggestion made in vol. xlv of the *Bach-Gesellschaft* edition be adopted; it may seem over-bold to alter the text without strong documentary evidence, but there is good reason for this suggestion, which is, that the figure of a quaver and two semiquavers in bars 3, 4, 7, and 8 should be changed into two semiquavers and a quaver, so as to correspond with bars 2 and 3 from the end. This also brings out the meaning of the opening theme of the Polonaise, which is evidently suggested by the little figure at the end of the Gavotte, just as the subject of Fugue 13 of the second book of the Wohltemperirtes Clavier, in F sharp major, is taken from the last notes of its prelude. The form of the Polonaise will surprise those who are only accustomed to the later polonaises, such as those of Chopin; but this serene type of the dance was common in the earlier days, and the many beautiful pieces in the form by W. F. Bach are mostly of

this type. The technical progress of this favourite son, and of Karl Philipp Emanuel, may very possibly have been kept in mind by their father when he wrote the lively Bourrée, since the last four bars of each part need the most careful, slow practice if they are to be mastered; and they are a useful test for the independence of the hands. The sedate Minuet separates this movement from the Gigue, with its charmingly wilful imitations. (Bischoff puts the Minuet between the Polonaise and the Bourrée, with some loss of contrast.) In bar 6 the last note of the left hand appears as A in the *Bach-Gesellschaft* and Bischoff editions, as D sharp in Peters. In the first complete bar of Part II, the fifth note in the right hand should be G sharp (as Bischoff), not F sharp (as Peters), according to the weight of manuscript authority.

I have thought it desirable to risk being tedious by referring in detail to the very large number of slight alterations in the text of the French Suites, as they illustrate Bach's enormous care and power of self-criticism very instructively. The admirable notes in Bischoff's edition summarize the long critical apparatus in the *Bach-Gesellschaft* preface to vol. xlv, and the Bach student cannot have a more profitable task than that of comparing the alterations, particularly those of the first and second suites, where Anna Magdalena's two books are the principal source of the works. It is not so much a case of a 'correct' text with many alterations due to transcribers' errors, as a gradual process that we are allowed to see going on in Bach's mind, as he improved his own creations during the three years between the dates of the two books. The variants of the final bars of the Courante of the C minor suite (see *ante*, pp. 15–17) are the most

conspicuous instance of Bach's never-ceasing search after perfection; but throughout the suites there are many passages in which the various textual alterations must have been due to the composer. From this point of view it is sincerely to be regretted that Anna Magdalena's second book breaks off in the middle of the second suite, but the authoritative transcripts are enough to show what trouble the master must have taken over his work.

III. *The 'English' Suites*

(*Bach-Gesellschaft*, vol. xiii and xlv (i); Peters, 2,783; Bischoff, vol. ii.)

In the set of six Suites which have always been known by the name of the 'English' Suites, we reach the culminating point of Bach's work for the harpsichord, as distinguished from the other keyboard instruments of his time. The impression we receive from the French set is one of light-hearted grace, but here we find a grandeur, a depth of emotional power, and a fullness of treatment of which there are few traces in the earlier suites. Not that vivacity is absent, but it is found almost entirely in the 'intermezzi' of these suites.

The collective name perplexed all the writers on Bach, down to the time when the late Edward Dannreuther lit upon what must now be accepted as the true explanation. In a copy made by John Christian Bach, there occur the words 'fait pour les Anglois'. This was taken by Forkel to mean that they were 'made for an Englishman', but as the Englishman

has never been identified, we are driven to guess either that Forkel's command of French was imperfect, or that he assumes J. C. Bach to have made a slip of the pen. It is tempting to imagine that Bach was acquainted with the compositions of the English masters, and especially with the Suites of Purcell. (The interesting works by Purcell's contemporaries were hardly known in England, and Spitta's opinion that it is difficult to guess what English compositions there were from which Bach could have learnt no doubt represents the general conviction of the German musicians from Bach's time onwards.) The only piece of documentary evidence which we possess that any English music of the time was known in Germany is the fact that a famous organ toccata by Purcell existed in manuscript in Germany without the composer's name, and was actually included in the edition of the *Bach-Gesellschaft* as a doubtful work of Bach himself.

Mr. Dannreuther's account of the name seems a little far-fetched, but there is no reason to doubt its accuracy. There was a fashionable teacher in London named Dieupart at the beginning of the eighteenth century, who published at Amsterdam a set of six suites, the last of which was copied out by Bach. Besides this external evidence, there are many points in Dieupart's work which have obviously given suggestions to Bach; these are enumerated in Dannreuther's book on Ornamentation (i. 138), but the most striking instance is the Gigue from the end of Dieupart's first suite, in A major, which undoubtedly inspired the theme of the prelude to Bach's first suite, in the same key. Dannreuther gives a detailed analysis of the changes by which Bach turns a rather conventional movement into the fine prelude we know. The

student will find this analysis most helpful, and it will give him a new sense of Bach's greatness in the manipulation of themes. In a Royal Institution lecture, Dannreuther surmised that in consequence of these resemblances, Dieupart's suites were known in the Bach family as the 'English Suites', and that the name was transferred, for the sake of distinction, to the suites by Bach himself, which contained so remarkable a point of resemblance to the London teacher's compositions.

The English Suites are assigned by all the authorities to the Cöthen period of his life, and as a manuscript copy exists, made by a pupil, which bears the date 1724–7, it is hard to accept Sir Hubert Parry's opinion that these suites were later in date than the Partitas, since these latter are known to have been written, or at least finished off, in the years 1726–31.

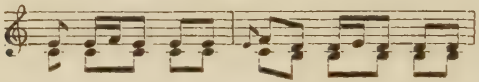
No. 1 in A

The Prelude of the first suite has two introductory bars, which establish the key before the 'Dieupart' theme enters, and in the second of these we find a device peculiar to keyed instruments, of allowing the essential notes of the harmony to be sustained in a rapid passage, so that a full chord is obtained. It is not the first occurrence of this beautiful way of increasing the sonority of the instrument, but it is interesting to notice how frequent it is in these suites. It is prominent again in the fine seriousness of the Allemande. The first Courante has a regular 3/2 rhythm, broken only in the last bar of each part. The second Courante, which is followed by two very interesting variations, or 'doubles', has the varying rhythm throughout, and both the variations have the

same attractive ambiguity. Exactly how Bach intended the four little movements to be played does not appear; it may be supposed that the first Courante was to be repeated after the second of the 'doubles', but not between each of the subordinate movements. There are a large number of 'Vorschläge' or appoggiaturas in these sections in the *Bach-Gesellschaft* edition, and the student is recommended to apply Türk's rule to them, and only to discard it when really ugly dissonances are the result. In a great number of cases the Peters edition, which leaves out most of these ornaments, may well be followed, but if the 'Vorschläge' are played, it is well at least to try them according to the strict rule. There are some important ones (omitted in Peters) in the exquisite Sarabande, which is built on a theme very like that of the 'Slumber Song' in the Christmas Oratorio. The phrase-marks in the hilarious Bourrée must be carefully observed, and the repeated crotchets in the bass part of the second section are better taken in pairs, as in the *Bach-Gesellschaft* edition, and that of Bischoff, rather than in groups of four, as in Peters. The second Bourrée, after which the first is to be repeated, is the happiest contrast to the first, for it follows a murmuring course ('sempre legato' would be the modern direction), as a relief to the detached pairs of notes in its predecessor. The Gigue, which should be played rather sedately, begins with imitations at the octave below, and the inversion of the theme in the second part is imitated at the fifth below. The last five bars of each part are marked 'piano', no doubt indicating a change of keyboard on the harpsichord; this and similar directions are comparatively rare, and may be followed in this instance by the use of the soft pedal, to give the contrast of tone-quality.

No. 2 in A minor

The magnificent Prelude to the second English Suite is so effective and interesting that there is a temptation to overlook the wonderful skill with which it is constructed. It is in what Spitta calls the perfect aria-form in three sections, and the texture of each section is worthy of the closest analysis. The virile theme of the opening is tossed about from one part to the other, and the passages, showing some resemblance to those of the great fugue (with the 'arpeggio' prelude) in the same key, foreshadow the manner of treatment characteristic of a much later day. The second section, beginning



supplies what we may call the feminine interest in the story; after this theme has been announced, there is a momentary interruption by the first theme, and the whole manipulation of this section well repays minute study. It will be noticed that in the second bar of the above there is an appoggiatura which does not appear in the Peters edition; it is present in all the similar passages in the *Bach-Gesellschaft* and Bischoff editions, and no doubt on the harpsichord it brought out the pleading expression of the subject in a way that can be realized on the piano by a competent player without the ornament. The first section is repeated exactly for the close of the prelude. The Allemande shows no such economy of material, but is lavish in fine themes that for the most part receive little treatment or development. In the Courante,

bars 4–6 have a 6/4 rhythm in contradiction of the prevailing 3/2. The deeply expressive Sarabande is followed by a decorated version headed 'les agréments de la même Sarabande', and Spitta considers that both versions were not intended to be played, but that the player was to be allowed to choose between them. The best way to settle the question is to play the simple version of each part first, and to give the ornamental version by way of repeat. It is much to be regretted that Bischoff, no doubt following the manuscripts a little too academically, gives only the bass of the ornamental version below the adorned part, though it is clearly desirable to repeat the harmonies which fill up the space in the simple version. In bar 8 of the ornamental version, the first note in the Peters edition clashes a B with a C; the C is read in one of the manuscripts, but is certainly an error, and there can be no excuse for putting the two together. In the last 8 bars there are important appoggiaturas, which, though written as semiquavers, should be taken according to Türk's rule, as full crotchets. The scurrying Bourrée is directed to be played 'alternativement' with its companion Bourrée (in the tonic major), that is with the usual return of the first piece after the second has been played. It seems bent on sweeping away any sentimental languor that might remain after the Sarabande, so as to get the hearer's mood back to the vigour of the Gigue, which for once has not an imitative beginning. According to some of the manuscripts there is a sign that after each of the two sections has been duly repeated, the whole Gigue is played through again (whether with or without the sectional repeats is not clear), but this would spoil the effect of the suite by making it too long.

No. 3 in G minor

The search for self-portraiture in the works of the great creative artists is perhaps dangerous, but there are occasions when the temptation is hard to resist, and this suite represents so fully so many sides of Bach's art that we can hardly help discerning corresponding traits in his personal character. No one who was not happy in his disposition and surroundings, at peace with himself and with all men, could conceivably have written such a thing as the Prelude, the very embodiment of mirth that is rooted in serenity, humour based on reason, and a virile energy that carries the movement along with infinite spirit. The way the parts enter at the beginning, tumbling down one after the other, makes the hearer fancy that many more than the actual four are employed. In the thoughtful optimism of the Allemande and the placid meditations of the Courante we seem to be shown the kind of philosophy that Bach attained in middle life, and these prepare us well for the deep emotion of the Sarabande, one of the most touching movements in music. As in the second suite, it is recommended that the ornamental version of each part should be played instead of the repeat. In the chord (arpeggio) at the beginning of each part there is a little diagonal stroke, in the first part between the G and the B flat, in the second part (the second chord of the first bar) between the B flat and the D. This, as explained by Bischoff, indicates that the intermediate note, A in the first case and C in the second, should be lightly touched and taken off at once. The long-held bass notes cannot be made to sustain the sound without reinforcement, even on the

most sonorous modern pianos, and although the best harpsichords had a remarkable power of maintaining the sound, yet even there the bass can hardly have been audible at the seventh of the slow bars. It is perhaps worth mentioning that in the sixth bar of the second part of the ornamental version the last group of notes appears in the *Bach-Gesellschaft* edition as one semiquaver followed by six demisemiquavers. The reading adopted by the Peters and Bischoff editions seems more in conformity with the other groups of the kind, but they are none of them very easy to make clear to the hearer. In the next bar, the 7th, the last semiquaver of the first group in the left hand appears variously as D (*Bach-Gesellschaft*), A flat (Peters), and C natural (Bischoff); good manuscript authority exists for all three, but D seems the most reasonable, as corresponding with the parallel passage in the simple version. The jollity of the Gavotte, and the murmuring sweetness of its companion, the Musette, have won for these movements a rather unenviable degree of popularity; for all that, it is rare to hear the repeated G's in the left-hand part of the first Gavotte quite satisfactorily played, or their humour brought out; according to the best texts there is first a shake a bar long, with A flat as the auxiliary note, then two mordents (with F sharp for the auxiliary), the minim at the beginning of each of these bars being held simply, and last, a succession of nine quavers, which suggest some kind of rapid reiteration not possible in the present day, which we can only imitate by grouping the notes in pairs. Unless the second Gavotte is taken very quickly (it must not be slower than the first) the drone-bass will require reinforcement, and to preserve the rhythm the note should be struck again

at the half-bar, not on the first beat. The Gigue, which sets out as if it were going to be a three-part fugue, ends with a couple of bars that we may call a musical quip, and sums up the philosophy of the whole suite. 'Life', we hear Bach saying to us, 'has its sorrows as well as its joys, but the wise man will accept what comes, and a sense of humour never did anybody harm.'

No. 4 in F

The fourth of the English Suites is the gayest of the set, with the exuberance of healthy youth, in contrast to the ripe humour of some movements in the third suite. Only superficial critics will see in this contrast proof of an earlier date of composition, for such development as can be traced in Bach's style is confined to technical matters; all the human emotions seem always to have been at his command. The Prelude, built upon the interplay of two contrasting themes (bars 1 and 2), has many interesting episodes independent of these, and by the casual hearer it might easily be mistaken for a movement in the 'sonata form' of a later generation. The *naïveté* of the reiterated triplets in the Allemande will remind organists of the prelude to the 'little' fugue in the same key as this suite. The Courante runs a vigorous course, and, like that of the G minor suite, has no cross-rhythm until the last bar of each part. The Sarabande is appropriately expressive, but has considerably less emotional power than the other Sarabandes. The ornament in bar 6 is better as an acciaccatura (Peters) than as the appoggiatura given in the *Bach-Gesellschaft* and Bischoff. In the sixth bar before the end of the movement, at the second

crotchet of the left-hand part, the middle note of the chord is an A flat in the autograph manuscript; but in six other manuscripts the B flat is given as in the Peters edition. The editors of the later *Bach-Gesellschaft* volume, with Bischoff, acting on the principle that the more difficult reading is to be preferred, have given the note as A flat, interpreting it as the equivalent of G sharp. At bar 3 from the end, the application of Türk's rule gives us a suave progression in thirds between the treble and tenor parts, and the same rule adds considerably to the beauty of the second bar of the second Minuet, in which there is a hint of the 'musette' character; this may surely be taken a little more deliberately than the first Minuet. The horn subject of the Gigue is bandied about from one part to another in most attractive fashion. The figure of repeated A's which first appears in bar 6 of the second part has been sadly ill-treated by various editors in the matter of the mordents, which really indicate the emphasis to be placed on the second beat of each bar where they appear. As the other mordents do not appear in the manuscripts, modern editors have thought fit to supply the want, and to put mordents on the fourth beat of the bar as well, thus depriving the figure of its character. The pianist of the present day may be recommended to leave out all the mordents, and to lay an emphasis on the second beat of each bar of the figure

so as to realize the purpose for which the mordents were put in.

No. 5 in E minor

The whole of the E minor Suite, with one brilliant exception, breathes so austere an air that few outside the circle of avowed Bach-lovers are likely to hold it in special favour; but to those who have assimilated the master's idioms, and who can enter into his deeper moods, the work will always be dear. The grand Prelude, which is described by Spitta as a combination of the fugue with the aria-form, is one of the longest movements in the range of the suites, as well as one of the hardest to make intelligible to the hearer. The entries of the fugue subject are not always easy to bring out without exaggeration. The descending theme of the Allemande is at once imitated in the left hand in the second bar, and inverted at the beginning of the second part, in the bass. In one guise or other it pervades the whole movement. The Courante again has no suggestion of cross-rhythm until the last bar of each part (can it be a mere coincidence that none of the Courantes of the English Suites have the characteristic interplay of the two rhythms?), and its charm will be greatly increased if the grace-notes in bars 7 and 8 of part 1, and bars 3 and 15 of part 2, are taken as long appoggiaturas, and held for a whole crotchet. Those in the first part appear in Peters as acciaccaturas, but the longer ornament is rightly given in the *Bach-Gesellschaft* and Bischoff editions. The ornaments in part 2 must be restored in the later editions from the *Bach-Gesellschaft*. In the last bar but one there is a grace-note, given in the *Bach-Gesellschaft* and Bischoff as C sharp, in Peters as E. For the latter note there is good reason apart from authority, for the C sharp, if held for a crotchet, gives

consecutive octaves with the bass part. The Sarabande is very plaintive, and the way its slight material is used is most instructive. The employment of the opening theme for the final cadence is a beautiful touch, and the treatment of the 'gruppetto' in the second bar is a foreshadowing of the way in which Beethoven develops what looks like an unimportant group of notes into something rich and strange. The 'Passepied en Rondeau' is one of the most delicious things in music, and though the first strain must be repeated in all five times, the ear never tires of it, and any abbreviation of the various *da capo* directions which appear in Peters would be felt as a real loss. Both Passepieds have to be kept very low in tone, at least when they are played in their place in the suite; if they were taken out for a single performance the player would be excused who should introduce variety and contrast in the amount of tone employed; he would probably take the second Passepied more softly and a little slower than the first, and might take the last appearance of the main theme louder than the rest. The Gigue is a strange but perfectly successful experiment in chromatic treatment. The slurs over the second and third quavers of the main theme must be carefully observed if the movement is to be made clear. The fugato openings of both parts (the second inverted) are most interesting, and will be very instructive to the student of 'real' and 'tonal' answers. In the 14th bar the second semiquaver of the alto part should be C natural, as in the *Bach-Gesellschaft* editions, not C sharp, as Peters. The harsh effect is in keeping with the rest of the piece. In bar 26 the fifth of the group of semiquavers should no doubt be C sharp, as in Bischoff. (The absence of the accidental in Peters may be an oversight.) In

bars 15 and 14 from the end, the *Bach-Gesellschaft*, followed by Bischoff, reads three even quavers in the top part, but the third of the first bar and the first of the second have descending appoggiaturas; it is true that the strict interpretation of these gives a series of consecutive sevenths, but in any case the former bar has no very smooth progression, and the compromise offered in Peters is hardly satisfactory.

No. 6 in D minor

The long and splendid Prelude to the sixth English Suite is a fine example of the means of obtaining sonority by sustaining the notes of an arpeggio figure; one bar, marked 'Adagio', separates the introductory portion from the Allegro which, according to Spitta, combines the fugal form with that of the aria. The middle section of this, after which the first is repeated exactly, is based on a striking theme of five repeated quavers, the masterly treatment of which gives special character to the movement. At the 18th bar of the Allegro the E in the last group of semiquavers should, of course, be E flat, as in the *Bach-Gesellschaft* and Bischoff editions; in the Peters edition it is so given, but supplied conjecturally at the corresponding place in the repetition. A mood of grave contemplation distinguishes the Allemande and the Courante, and the Sarabande is a kind of expressive framework in which are set the manifold and subtle adornments of the 'Double'. In the penultimate bar of each section of the Sarabande a turn appears in the Peters edition; this should be a trill in the same place, as in the *Bach-Gesellschaft* and Bischoff editions. No more delightful relief from the solemnity of the foregoing movements can be imagined than the pair of Gavottes which are

among the best-known and best-loved things in Bach's keyboard music. The second Gavotte is properly described as a Musette, for the drone-bass, D, is uninterrupted throughout. The Gigue, for all its brilliance, sums up the austere mood of the whole, and is a most appropriate close to the series of masterpieces. Forkel quotes it as an example of the use of a 'pedal point' in the middle of a piece, and says of this movement rather naïvely, 'On a first hearing this Gigue, imperfectly rendered, may not sound well.' He goes on, 'But it grows more beautiful as it becomes more familiar, and what seemed harsh is found to be smooth and agreeable, until one never tires of playing and hearing it.' [1]

IV. *The Partitas*

(*Bach-Gesellschaft*, iii; Peters, 2,746; Bischoff, iii.)

THERE is an annoying irregularity in the matter of the names of different forms of music in and about the eighteenth century. We have seen how 'Sonata' sometimes means a single movement, like those of Domenico Scarlatti, and sometimes bears its modern signification, of a work in several movements; 'Overture', in like manner, occasionally stands for a whole suite of pieces, though it is more often used of a continuous piece, generally consisting of an introduction and allegro; and the words 'Partie' and 'Partita' are used by Bach and by some of his predecessors as equivalent to our 'variation', as in the organ works,

[1] Forkel, *Johann Sebastian Bach* (C. Sanford Terry's translation), p. 78.

where we have 'Partite' used of successive variations on a chorale. The more usual meaning of the term, and one that is universally recognized in later times, is as the exact equivalent of 'Suite', and it is doubtless due to the six harpsichord 'Partite' of Bach that the name has at last become definite. The history of these six suites has presented a problem to more than one of Bach's biographers, for while their date seems definitely established, their texture is so much slighter than that of the English Suites that Sir Hubert Parry surmised them to be early pieces collected together, bearing no special relation to one another except identity of keys. What is certain about them is that they appeared successively in the years 1726–31; that the publication of 1726, consisting of the first Partita, was inscribed 'Op. 1', indicating that it was the first printed work of the master; and that in 1731 they were issued all together, with the title 'Clavierübung', a name borrowed from Kuhnau, who published collections with this title in 1689 and 1695. We learn from Forkel[1] that they won immediate success with the public. 'Such compositions for the Clavier', he says, 'had not been seen or heard before, and a man who could play them was sure of a success. Our young players to-day would profit by the study of them, so brilliant, agreeable, expressive, and original are they.' Parry's theory of an early date of origin is based on the argument that as Bach printed nothing for the keyboard before 1726, 'the dates at which the works were issued at least decided the latest dates which were possible for their composition; but, as will be seen in most cases, it left the limit very elastic in the other direction.'[2] This theory receives further

[1] Terry's translation, p. 116.

[2] C. H. H. Parry, *Johann Sebastian Bach*, p. 456.

support from the fact that Anna Magdalena's second book (1725) contains the 3rd and 6th Partitas, so that they at least were in existence some years before their publication. The versions there given (issued in the *Bach-Gesellschaft* edition, vol. xliii (ii), and in Bischoff) are most interesting to the student who can thus watch the process of the minute revision of certain things like figuration.

It is not unnatural that Bach should have chosen to give the public the kind of music that would be sure to be popular in the best sense, and that the yearly instalments of the *Clavierübung* should have been composed in a slighter style than those monumental works which were meant primarily for Bach's sons, and were circulated in manuscript copies among his intimates. There can be no question of Bach's having, at any time of his life, written down to meet the public taste; and after all, the contrast in style between the two collections is perhaps less violent than might be supposed.

A striking feature of the six Partitas is that each has a different title for its opening movement, and that these differ from each other in design as well as in name. The successive titles are: 1, Prelude; 2, Sinfonia; 3, Fantasia; 4, Overture; 5, Préambule; 6, Toccata.

No. 1 in B flat

The opening Prelude is a marvel of that grace which marks the whole suite. The little trills are necessary to its interpretation. The serene gaiety of the Allemande is in sharp contrast with the austerity of those in the English Suites, and the Courante (virtually in 9/8 time) has no opposition of rhythms,

although the notation looks as if the figure against were meant to be played as in modern music; it is, of course, not so, but the former group is to be played throughout as if it were . The elegiac Sarabande has ornamentation of rapid 'divisions', as they used to be called, the fantastic effect of which will be better brought out if the relative values of the notes be adhered to, than if the passages are taken *ad libitum*. The two Minuets, contrary to Bach's usual custom, are in the same key, but in different styles, the second having some of the characteristics of the Musette. If the appoggiaturas are taken at all, Türk's rule should be obeyed, and the grace-notes must sound as a minim in the first part, and as a crotchet in the second. The Gigue, which must owe something to the harpsichord works of Domenico Scarlatti in regard to the continual crossing of hands, is one of the most genial things in Bach; and in fact, if it were desired to introduce a partially educated musician to the world of Bach's music, no better gateway could be found than the first Partita as a whole.

No. 2 in C minor

It is impossible to suppose that the various names given to the introductory movements of the six Partitas were chosen at random, though some of them do not seem particularly applicable in the present day, when their meaning has been more exactly defined. The second Partita begins with a 'Sinfonia', and we may take it as foreshadowing the usage of modern times, since it is in three movements, a Grave, an Andante, and an Allegro. It is curious that the name 'Sinfonia' had been applied to the set of 15 'Inventions' in three parts, as if to distinguish

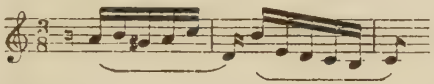
them from their companions in two parts. The name 'Sinfonia' was also given to the instrumental introduction in several of the church cantatas, and is generally applied to a single movement of a more or less elaborate character. This 'Sinfonia' has an opening on the pattern of the French overtures, and its massive style, with the 'dotted' rhythm so commonly employed, leads most effectively to the plaintive and melodious Andante, in which, over a regular bass of even quavers, a solo part wanders in passages of great beauty. The 'finale', as it may be called, has a *fugato* opening, and is in two parts only. The greater part of the Allemande is also in two parts; in the fifth (complete) bar the last note but one of the bass is given as F in the *Bach-Gesellschaft* and Bischoff editions, but the E flat preferred in Peters seems more characteristic. The usual change of rhythm at the close of each section of the Courante is made particularly prominent in this instance, though the Partitas contain only one other example of the Courante, properly so called, as distinguished from the Italian Corrente. The flowing and impassioned Sarabande throws into strong relief the curious resemblances in gait and mood that make the last two movements of the suite a little less effective than they might be if they were divided by something quieter. They are named 'Rondeau' and 'Caprice' respectively; in the former, four repetitions of the very original theme with its leaps of a seventh and its staccato phrases, are separated by smoother episodes (the subject on its last appearance is slightly modified); but it can hardly escape notice that this movement discounts some of the effect of the 'Caprice', which might well be taken as a musical portrait of Puck, so enchanting is its wayward humour. The absence of

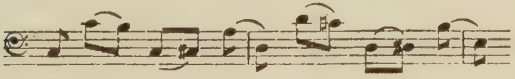
any Gigue from this Partita, the similarity of the last two movements, and the title of the whole set as published ('Klavierübung bestehend in Präludien, Allemanden, Kouranten, Sarabanden, Giguen, Menuetten und andern Galanterien') give some support to Sir Hubert Parry's theory that the component parts of the Partitas were gathered together from various isolated movements, and were arranged in a more or less arbitrary manner, instead of showing a logical connexion among the movements such as we find in the French and English Suites.

No. 3 in A minor

The introductory movement of the third Partita is styled 'Prelude' in Anna Magdalena's book, where there are small differences of reading, mostly showing that in preparing the work for publication Bach made it rather more elaborate and interesting. The name 'Fantasia' may seem a little inappropriate to the rather formal opening of the suite; but it must be remembered that before Bach's time the word implied none of the wayward variety that we associate with it in modern times. The early 'fantasies' or 'fancies' of the English composers were nearly always in a style that we should call fugal, and there is seldom any change of movement in them; it was not until later that the severer form was discarded, and the composer left free to indulge his fancy as he would. At first sight, the melodic progression may seem fantastic enough, for there are not a few unlikely intervals, but the key to the meaning of the piece is in the first two notes of the semiquaver group, for the rise of one degree of the scale goes pretty continuously through its course. The phrasing must be carefully

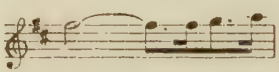
observed ; it is undoubtedly to be treated thus,



the second semiquaver of the bar being the first note of the phrase, and the first note of the bar the end of the phrase. The Allemande, which is even slower than is usual with such movements, is an example of the device, so common in the English Suites, of obtaining sonority by sustaining the harmonious notes of an arpeggio passage. The Courante is a fine specimen of the Italian 'corrente', and the final bars contain some interesting chromatic treatment. As the Allemande is more serious in mood than usual, so the Sarabande is correspondingly lighter, and might well rank as one of the 'Galanterien' of the suite. It is tempting to suppose that the point of the joke in the Burlesca is that the pair of rising notes referred to as the key to the Fantasia provides the material of this lively movement, which in Anna Magdalena's book is called a Minuet. The way the two parts join in a unison scale reminds one of a similar passage in the two-part fugue in E minor, No. 10 of the '48'. The bass of the following bars is surely wrongly phrased in the Peters edition (all the notes are marked staccato by Bischoff), and the meaning, as well as the supposed reference to the Fantasia, is better brought out if it is phrased thus,

There appears to be no manuscript authority for marking the first group of notes in the Scherzo

with a sforzando, as both Peters and Bischoff agree in doing; but it is certainly quite effective, and would correspond to the usage of the harpsichord, where the first group would be taken on the lower manual, the rest on the upper. The Scherzo does not appear in Anna Magdalena's book. The Gigue, with its fugal opening and the usual inversion of the theme in the second section, is finely chromatic. The entries of the theme at the end of bars 10, 8, and 6 from the end are difficult to manage effectively, and must have been especially so on the harpsichord.

No. 4 in D

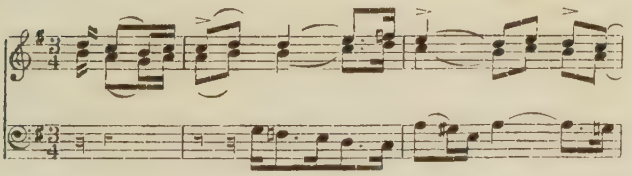
The fourth Partita has so striking a unity of style and mood, so great a similarity of themes, that it is impossible to accept, so far at least as this one suite is concerned, Sir Hubert Parry's theory that the component parts of the Partitas were unrelated movements, merely grouped according to keys. Indeed, Parry remarks that this Partita 'has a more homogeneous effect' than some of the others. The opening of the introductory movement seems to be used as a kind of motto throughout, though modified and adorned in all sorts of ways. The three rising notes at the end of this example

are employed as the groundwork of the Allemande and the Courante; they are prominent as an episode in the Aria, inverted in the Sarabande, and are the essential part of the theme in the Minuet; while they begin the subject of the second part of the Gigue. But without pressing the virtual identity of themes

too far, it is beyond question that the whole Partita has a wonderful charm and expressiveness throughout. The *maestoso* opening of the Overture (the name needs no explanation) is most impressive, more particularly if the semiquavers after the dotted quavers are made very short, almost as if the dot were a double one. The ornaments, many of which have apparently been misplaced in the *Bach-Gesellschaft* edition, are essential, and Türk's rule as to the appoggiaturas can be applied with great effect. The Allegro has the usual *fugato* opening, and is peculiarly brilliant and eloquent. Ten bars from the end, the Bischoff edition begins the third group in the right hand with a pair of demisemiquavers, which should obviously be semiquavers. The Allemande is full of emotional quality, and the exquisite figure which enters at bar 13 is poignant and yet consolatory. Seven bars from the end, in the Peters edition, there is a misprint; the first note of the third group in the right hand should be F sharp tied to the previous note. The Courante is an interesting example of the 6/4 measure, though the time-signature is as usual 3/2. Spitta says of this movement that 'it is marked 3/2 in order to prevent the feeling of the two beats from becoming too strong. The time of the Courante was properly neither one nor the other, but a mixture of both. It was a rule that even passages in 6/4 time were to be played in 3/2 time, that is to say that in the case of phrases which were evidently, both by their formation and natural character, in 6/4, the remembrance of the 3/2 time was to be kept up by means of occasional 3/2 accentuation.'[1] He quotes a passage from Marpurg's *Kritische Briefe* to the same effect, ending with the words: 'The late Herr Capellmeister Bach

[1] Spitta, *J. S. Bach* (English translation), iii. 158.

has left us a sufficiency of genuine models of this proper Courante time.' The flowing beauty of this Courante is apt to make the player forget to recall to the hearers the fact that 3/2 is marked at the beginning. At the eighth complete bar of the second section there is an unfortunate misprint in the Peters edition; the first note of the right-hand part, and the first note after the group of three quavers, should be quavers, not crotchets. The delicate Aria, which, as before mentioned, precedes the Sarabande in this and the sixth Partita, seems to me to allude to the 'motto' theme in the third complete bar. The Sarabande has a strange halt in the second bar of each section; is it fanciful to imagine the halt to be called in order to bring out the motto theme, here used as preparatory to the long-held note? Apart from this, the movement is quite worthy of its companions. The Minuet begins with the rising motto disguised by a turn and an intercalated note, but its second part seems to have a more direct reference to it. In its second bar there is a single note occupying the last two beats of the three, like the 'halt' of the Sarabande. The second bar of the Gigue, again, has the same peculiarity, which can hardly have been purely accidental. Built on an arpeggio theme up and down, it employs, towards the end of the first part, a similar device to that so often noticed in the English suites, the bottom note of the arpeggio being left to sound as a bass, at whatever part of the bar it occurs; later on the device is used again, and chords are formed from the figure. The second section of the Gigue is built, as Spitta notices, on a new theme, which serves as a counterpoint to the first; can it be only a coincidence that the new theme starts with the three rising notes of the 'motto'?

No. 5 in G

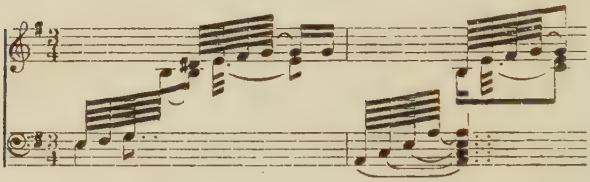
The fifth Partita is sufficiently homogeneous in its style, and for the listener is remarkably easy to follow and to grasp. It is a different matter for the player, who seems to be occasionally required to forget all about technical rules, and to be full of resource in the way of overcoming various little problems that present themselves. It would be easy to rearrange the scale-passages in the brilliant Præambulum, if it were a question of only playing the notes; but the crossing of hands that is clearly indicated in the text puts meaning into the rapid semiquavers, and must not be shirked. This introductory movement gives the prevailing note of the whole suite, which in its approach to triviality is a strong contrast to its predecessor. In the Allemande the group of a dotted quaver with a semiquaver, against the semiquaver triplets which provide the greater part of the figuration, must of course be played as a quaver and a semiquaver. Here, and in the Sarabande, adherence to Türk's rule about the appoggiatura is of great value. The Courante, or Corrente, as it should strictly be called, has no great importance beyond its effectiveness as a piece of virtuoso music. The Sarabande, if any other interpretation than Türk's is adopted, will seem jerky, but if taken thus:

according to the strict tradition, it will be found melodious, even though the successions of thirds may be felt as a little cloying. In the Bischoff edition a compromise is suggested, whereby the grace-notes vary in length in a very arbitrary manner; there is absolutely no contemporary authority for such a proceeding, as the grace-notes must either be taken as real appoggiaturas, or quite short, as if they had a stroke through them. The 'Tempo di Minuetto', though marked as in 3/4 time, is virtually in 6/8 time almost throughout, after the manner of the cross-rhythms in the French courantes. The double stems to the first and fourth quavers seem to indicate that these notes are played with the right hand, the others with the left. On the harpsichord the two manuals would be used for this. A slight emphasis on the notes with double stems will represent the desired effect on the piano. The Passepied, though not comparable to the enchanting movement with the same title in the fifth English Suite, is sufficiently attractive. The Gigue presents the same anomaly as that of the preceding Partita, in that a new theme is started in the second part; but both are treated fugally, and in the middle of the second part the two themes are worked together with fine effect. The piece is really a double fugue.

No. 6 in E minor

The 'Toccata' which opens this suite is merely called 'Prelude' in Anna Magdalena's book of 1725, which contains this and the third Partita. The *maestoso* introduction has the massive arpeggios which, as we have seen, were often used to form held chords; here the chord is not expressly directed to be held,

but the meaning of the movement almost requires it to be sustained, and on the pianoforte a sparing and careful use of the sustaining pedal may be recommended. The appoggiature must be given their full value. The movement leads without a break into a fugal section of great beauty. In both parts of the Toccata the chord of the diminished seventh is prominent, and the sequences of figures derived from this chord are a noteworthy feature of the beginning and end. Towards the middle the earlier version in Anna Magdalena's book has the parts exchanged for two or three bars. The Bischoff edition gives the variant in a foot-note, and records all the omissions and the rejected readings, a valuable help to the diligent student of Bach's methods. The Allemande is deeply expressive, and should be taken very deliberately. The conventional flourish at the end of each part connects the movement with the curious Gigue, where such flourishes seem to have no very appropriate place. The Courante—another 'corrente' by the way—is a study in syncopation, and the homely and attractive little phrase which appears in the groups of demisemiquavers in bars 29 and following tantalizes the hearer by its purely episodical character. Of the next movement (omitted in Anna Magdalena's book) Parry writes: 'The Aria, the added movement, is rather slight. Bach evidently put it in to ease the work of its excess of severity, and possibly to counterbalance the effect produced by the transformation of the Gigue from the simpler form in which it appears in Anna Magdalena's book, to the rather abstruse form here adopted, which is food for highly-developed wits rather than for ordinary humdrum minds.'[1] The Sarabande is splendidly

[1] Parry, *J. S. Bach*, p. 461.

elaborate, and the execution of the rapid notes, if they are to be given their full value, will tax the powers of even the most rhythmically perfect players. There are in the first chord, and elsewhere, the little transverse strokes which mean that the intermediate notes between the printed members of the chord, are to be lightly played and released at once, thus:

In the rather 'angular' Gavotte, since the figure of a dotted quaver and a semiquaver appears in the first bar, it seems doubtful whether the triplets which do not enter till the third complete bar should be allowed to modify the execution of the other figure. The strangely austere Gigue is not really more 'abstruse' in its final form than in the shape it wears in Anna Magdalena's book; there it is in notes of half the value of those in the ultimate form, but there is very little change in the actual music, except that the last note of the second bar (and parallel places) is a single quaver in the manuscript and, as engraved, is a minim with a shake above it. The differences between the two versions are carefully recorded in the Bischoff edition. No hearer could conceivably detect which style of notation was being followed by the player, and there is no actual increase in the austerity of the whole suite because of the alteration.

V. *Suites not included in the Three Collections*

Partita in B minor (Ouvertüre nach französischer Art)

(*Bach-Gesellschaft*, iii ; Peters, 2,747 ; Bischoff, iii.)

One of Bach's most important works for the harpsichord lies outside the sets that have been considered. It is known as the Partita in B minor, although that name does not appear on the original publication. It was engraved, very possibly by Bach himself, and issued, together with the 'Italian Concerto', as the second part of the *Clavierübung*. The original title runs :

> Zweiter Teil der Klavier-Übung bestehend in einem Concerto nach Italienischem Gusto und einer Overture nach französischer Art vor ein Claviercymbal mit zweien Manualen Denen Liebhabern zur Gemüths-Ergötzung verfertiget von Johann Sebastian Bach.

The name 'Overture' or 'Ouverture à la manière française' was sometimes applied to orchestral suites, and there is no doubt that it does not exclusively refer to the opening movement. Just as the word 'Sonata' is primarily applicable to the first movement of what we now call a sonata, so the word 'Overture' did not exclude the idea of a number of movements following the one to which the name was properly affixed. In this instance the number of 'Galanterien' is so great that they must be considered as an important part of the suite, not merely as additional attractions subordinate to the larger movements. Here, too,

there is no Allemande; the fact is explained by Spitta on the ground that this work was a kind of transcription or transference of the orchestral form to the clavier, and in the orchestral suites the Allemande has no place, being exclusively a keyboard piece.

English students of Bach have a very special privilege and opportunity in regard to this suite and the Italian Concerto; for in the British Museum are copies of the first impression (about 1735), and of the third, issued a few years later.[1] In the former there are annotations, stated on the best authority to be in Bach's own handwriting, which prove that this copy was used as a set of proof-sheets in preparing for the later issue. Careful examination of the two editions, and Bach's corrections, allows us to see the composer actually at work, revising and reconsidering various small points; and, like music-engravers of later times, Bach, or the engraver of the later issue, overlooked a good many of the alterations made in ink on the pages of the first. It would serve no useful purpose to go over all the corrections here, more particularly as I published a complete list of them in the Sammelbände of the *Internationale Musik-Gesellschaft*.[2] Furthermore, there exists in the Berlin Library a transcript of this Partita, in the handwriting of Bach himself, according to some authorities, or in that of Anna Magdalena, in the opinion of others. It is there in the key of C minor, and there has been some discussion, which need not concern us here, about the reason for this. There may have been some idea in the master's mind of following the example of Kuhnau, whose *Clavierübung* contains suites in the different keys arranged in alphabetical order. If we

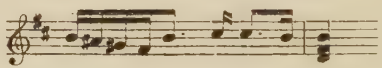
[1] The press-marks are K. 8. g. 7. and g. 548 b respectively.
[2] Vol. ii (1901), p. 643.

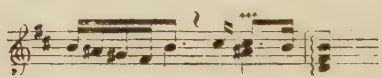
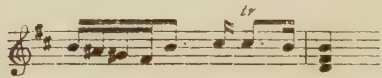
suppose that the present suite stood at first in C minor, and that Bach wished to complete his series of Partitas by representing the only one of the seven keys not illustrated in the set of six, we may guess that this is a reason for the transposition into B minor. But it never can have been irksome to Bach to use this, his favourite key, and the whole contention seems a little far-fetched.

Those who desire to recover as nearly as may be the old conditions in which Bach's music was originally heard will hold this suite in special honour, for in all the best editions of this and the Italian Concerto we are allowed to see the exact way in which the two manuals of the harpsichord were employed. As a rule the words 'piano' and 'forte', printed in full, indicate that the directions are Bach's own, although here and there, as in the 'Echo' of this suite, the usual initial letters only are given in the Peters edition (Bischoff gives the words in full). As the nature of the harpsichord allowed of little gradation of tone but much contrast, it is advisable on the pianoforte to represent the contrast by judicious use of the soft pedal, notably in the Allegro movement of the Overture, the second Gavotte, the second Bourrée, and above all, in the Echo.

The 'Ouverture' starts with a splendidly impressive Adagio, in which great care in the matter of the relative note-values is necessary. The two issues differ mainly in respect of the ornaments, but there are a few more important readings that deserve notice. In the last bar of the fifth line of the first page (the laying-out of the page is the same in all three modern editions) Bach added a C sharp crotchet for the right hand at the beginning of the bar below the other notes, but either he or his engraver forgot to make

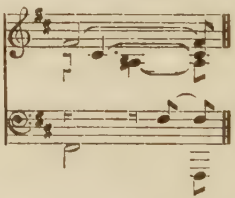
the addition. The fine fugal Allegro has characteristic staccato notes in its theme, and some of the staccato marks are left out of both the original issues, though written in by Bach. The 26th bar of the Allegro is a good example of the process, and of the way in which some only of the corrections were actually engraved. This and the first chord of the following bar stand thus in the first issue :



Bach corrected them as follows :

but the later issue has only this :

Bischoff gives the passage as corrected by Bach. Bar 52 (right hand) in the first version has no staccato marks ; the sewere added by Bach, but in the process of correction the leger line of the C sharp fell out, though the note kept its place below the stave, so that modern editors, even those of the *Bach-Gesellschaft*, have read the note as D. (Bischoff restores the C sharp rightly.) At bar 58 there is an interesting detail, illustrating some of the limitations of Bach's time. In the copy in C minor the first note of the bass is the lower G ; in the B minor version this stands, in all editions (including Bischoff), as the F sharp immediately

below the bass stave. It seems pretty certain that Bach's harpsichord had no note lower than the low G, so that the low note had to be sacrificed when the piece was set in B minor. This makes it probable that the C minor version is the earlier. Of course, as Bischoff says in a foot-note, it would be perfectly legitimate to play the low F sharp on the piano. The resumption of the Adagio and the repeat of the whole Allegro are curious peculiarities of this suite; to obey the injunction would be to make the whole very long.

The pages containing the next three movements (i. e. from the beginning of the Courante down to the end of the second Passepied) had to be re-engraved, and there are comparatively unimportant corrections made in them. As I have said, there is no Allemande in this suite, but the Courante is a noble specimen of the French type, in which, as elsewhere in the work, the observance of Türk's rule will add greatly to the flowing effect. The three repetitions of the bass arpeggio on different parts of the bar in the opening strain add very attractively to the rhythmic ambiguity that is so charming in these movements. About the two Gavottes there is little that need be said, for they are very well known and universally beloved. In the second section of No. 1, in the sixth complete bar, the Peters edition does not restore the naturals in the last group of semiquavers; Bischoff makes the restoration. The second Gavotte, meant to be played on the upper manual of the harpsichord, is built on the same theme as the first with a slight modification; in the seventh complete bar from the end the right hand should be thus:

as Bischoff reads it. In the pair of Gavottes the second is in the relative major; in the Passepieds the second is in the tonic major, and the contrast of tonalities is wonderfully effective in giving variety to the whole. At the end of the second there is the direction that the first should be repeated; a similar *da capo* should probably be understood in the Gavottes and Bourrées, but it does not seem to be definitely enjoined. The Sarabande, which is contemplative rather than deeply emotional, seems, as Spitta says, to look down from inspired heights at the artless gambols of the other pieces. The lovely pair of Bourrées are in the same key, as though, after the employment of two different major keys (in the Gavottes and Passepieds respectively), Bach had tried the experiment of remaining in the same key for the second Bourrée. The chord of F sharp at the end of the first part of the second Bourrée would undoubtedly have stood thus:

but for the limitations of Bach's harpsichord; this is the shape of the chord in the C minor version. The Gigue can hardly fail to strike the student as rather unnecessarily insistent on its recurring rhythm; a careful application of Türk's rule will modify this very greatly. The Gigue is followed by one of the most delightful movements in the whole of Bach, an

'Echo' in which the two manuals of the harpsichord are used in brilliant alternation. Here is no mechanical echo effect such as older composers had often employed, for the repetitions are seldom quite exact; they often fill up the gaps in an arpeggio with humorous intent, and present the melodic ideas in a new aspect. A careful use of the soft pedal is advisable to obtain the proper contrast.

Suite in A minor

(*Bach-Gesellschaft*, xxxvi; Peters, 4,518; Bischoff, ii.)

This Suite, like the Partita just discussed, allows us a glimpse of Bach in his workshop; for there are two versions of it in existence, and from internal evidence it is clear that the master made many alterations in the direction of greater simplicity, and many dealing with ornaments. What is obviously the earlier version exists in a manuscript formerly belonging to Rust, and now in the Royal Library at Berlin. Four of the French Suites, this work, and the suite in E flat, to be discussed later, appear in it, written by Bach's hand, and the title is 'Sex Suiten pur le Clavesin compossee par Mos. J. S. Bach'. The other version appears in Kellner's collection, and all the authorities are agreed that it represents the mature decision of the composer.

It is worth noticing that this and the next suite are without preludes in the 'Rust' autograph; and we may conjecture that there was an idea in Bach's mind of including these two among the French suites and conforming to the pattern there set by omitting the prelude to this one, which only appears in the Kellner copy. (It is given in Peters, but not in Bischoff.) It is a straightforward piece of no great

interest, the mood of which might be taken as rather pensive, if it were not marked 'fort gai'. In bar 15 the Peters edition ventures to alter the text, for the third and fourth quavers in the bass are B and C, not C and E flat, which have evidently been substituted so as to correspond with the following bar. The Allemande has much of the charm and dignity of those in the French Suites, and is quite worthy to stand beside them. In the fourth bar of the second part there is a difference of reading between the two versions which illustrates Bach's power of self-criticism; the two readings may be compared in the Peters edition, which gives that of Kellner, and that of Bischoff, which agrees with the Rust autograph. In bars 4 and 3 from the end, the tenor part disappears in the autograph, and the bass is slightly different. Here again the two modern editions may be profitably compared. The Courante is a very attractive specimen of the French type, reserving its cross-rhythms until the last bar of each section. The alterations here are in the direction of greater elaboration. For the Sarabande, which in the later version is expressive and serenely plaintive, we have in the earlier a 'Sarabande simple' followed by a 'Sarabande double'. The former with its almost persistent rhythmic figure is far less free and confident than its substitute in the later version, and the 'double' is a rather mechanical variation on the harmonic scheme of the 'simple' Sarabande, such as might figure in some chaconne. To make up for the omission of the 'Sarabande double', the later version contains a charming Minuet, beginning with two E's; one adorned with a mordent, the other with a turn. Care must be taken to bring out the difference, as the pair of notes with the same ornaments reappears twice over in the later part of

the movement. The Gigue, treated according to the orthodox plan of a fugal opening and an inversion in the second section, is very lively.

Suite in E flat

(*Bach-Gesellschaft*, xxxvi ; Peters, 4,518 ; Bischoff, ii.)

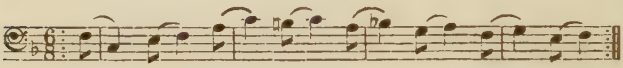
This Suite, like the preceding work, is closely connected with the French Suites (Bischoff gives them as an appendix to those suites). This one appears, not only in the Rust autograph, with the first four French Suites and the suite in A minor, but in an important copy in the Berlin Library, where it is made to serve as the sixth of the French Suites. In the 'Rust' autograph, and there only, we find the two Allemandes side by side ; for the most part, the first is given alone, and in one manuscript the second is given without the first. It is very doubtful if both were ever intended to be played together, for in the autograph the second Allemande is evidently an addition made after the rest of the manuscript was complete, but still in the composer's handwriting. There can be little difference of opinion as to which of the two is the more characteristic and original, for while the first has the graceful and rather conventional movement of the French Suites, the second contains, from about bar 11 onwards, many of those chromatic progressions which have procured for Bach the adjective 'crabbed' in the vocabulary of some superficial musicians. In the bar referred to, the third group of semiquavers has that figure sometimes called a double appoggiatura, consisting of the semitone above and below the principal note (C flat, A natural, and B flat), and the supposed harshness of the pro-

gression (which is imitated later on in the second section of the piece) has led Bischoff to substitute a C natural for the C flat, and the editors of the *Bach-Gesellschaft* to replace the note by a most conventional B flat. Happily the Peters edition gives the true reading. In the third bar of the second section of the first Allemande, the last note of the second group of semiquavers has also suffered the same indignity, for its last note appears as C in the *Bach-Gesellschaft*, against the weight of documentary evidence. The Courante is one of the finest specimens of the French type to be found in the whole range of the suites. The cross-rhythm of 3/2, which first appears in the third complete bar, is accompanied in the left-hand part by a persistent figure in 6/4 time, and the way the two rhythms are combined is delightful. The Sarabande is hardly worthy of the rest of the suite; it is rather sugary, and even if we adopt the profusion of ornaments given in the *Bach-Gesellschaft* and by Bischoff, it does not become very interesting. The single Bourrée, on the other hand, is full of fun, and the two Minuets which conclude the suite (for it has no Gigue) are the perfection of grace. In the first of these, the second section begins with a bass note D in the autograph, followed in Peters; the *Bach-Gesellschaft* and Bischoff prefer the easier B flat. In the second Minuet, which implies the upper manual of the harpsichord, there is a murmuring effect of great beauty in the bass part, which serves all the purpose of a 'drone' bass, while giving opportunity for changing harmonies.

Suite (Overture) in F

(*Bach-Gesellschaft*, xxxvi ; Peters, 4,558 ; Bischoff, vii.)

This little composition, which Spitta, no doubt rightly, assigns to an early part of Bach's life, is without autograph authority, but is contained in several manuscripts, and is doubtless genuine. Like the Partita in B minor it is always called 'Overture', from the name strictly applied to its first movement. This is in the 'French' form with a *maestoso* opening in 'dotted' rhythm and a profusion of ornaments which are better left out on the pianoforte. The curious close on the dominant leads to an Allegro in 3/8 time with a fugal beginning, including four entries of the subject, though there are very seldom four parts in use. At bar 20 from the end the *Bach-Gesellschaft* somewhat arbitrarily conjectures an A in place of the second semiquaver against the reading of the authorities. The overture is followed by an 'Entrée' of very simple structure, in which the most remarkable thing is the use of the opening phrase at the end of each section as leading back to the repeat. The second section is inverted. The theme of the Minuet with its singularly charming three-bar rhythm is doubly effective after the exquisite Trio in the same key, the feature by which this suite is most affectionately remembered. While the right hand has a little recurring tune in four-bar rhythm, the left has a free figure of quavers, in which a legato touch seems to be required ; notwithstanding some wide intervals, the use of the sustaining pedal is to be deprecated, though the soft pedal may be appropriately used throughout the trio. A jolly little Bourrée separates this from the tiny Gigue, the

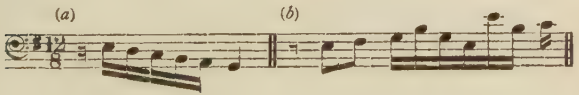
naïveté of which reminds us of some of the early suites by Englishmen, which have little of finality about them, but just leave off. The slurs in the right-hand occur in the best of the transcripts, but I cannot help thinking that the phrasing conjectured in the Peters edition for the left-hand part is sadly wanting in point. (Bischoff slurs only two of the left-hand notes in this piece.) I venture to recommend the following, as more likely to bring out the meaning of the passage:

In the third bar of the second part the E in the bass of the Peters and Bischoff editions, and the C which appears in the same place in the *Bach-Gesellschaft*, are purely conjectural, as the manuscripts have a rest here.

Suite in E minor

(*Bach-Gesellschaft*, xlv (i); Peters, 4,518; Bischoff, vii.)

Of this suite and those in A minor and E flat (see pp. 61–4) (all three seem to have been considered as 'possibilities' for inclusion among the French Suites) Spitta says, 'They are so admirable that only something of very superior beauty could have a right to displace them'. It has been conjectured that this one may have been intended for the lute; for the first thing that strikes the reader is the low pitch in which it is set. The highest note attained in the whole suite is the C in the treble stave; but, on the other hand, some of the chords in the left-hand part are unusually thick, and the whole

possesses a greater sonority than is found in the French Suites. Whether any lute was in existence upon which even the cleverest performer could execute certain of the passages in the work is extremely doubtful, and I should think it more likely that it was suggested by some defective keyed instrument, or one with a very limited compass. The Prelude begins with the word 'Passaggio', which seems to indicate a free and *ad libitum* rendering of the first flourish and possibly of the rapid scale passages that interrupt the chords in 'dotted' rhythm. The Presto in 3/8 time is a most attractive piece with the usual *fugato* opening. The Allemande has the device, mentioned before in connexion with the English Suites, of building up a chord by sustaining the notes of an arpeggio, and thus gaining sonority. The Courante has a lovely ambiguity of rhythm, rather than the direct contradiction of one rhythm by the other. In the fifth bar from the end the last note in the right-hand part is apparently meant to lead into the figure (marked 'scherz.' in Peters), and it seems better to read a single quaver B, with the *Bach-Gesellschaft*, than as it is given in the Peters and Bischoff editions. The Sarabande is eloquent and mature in style, and full of dignity. The values of the rapid notes in the second section differ in the various editions, and a certain amount of latitude in their execution is quite excusable. The Bourrée supplies the usual note of hilarity, and the Gigue has two little subjects



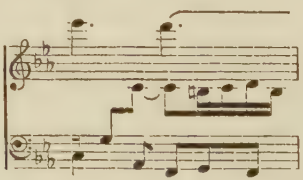
which are worked in most interesting guise; the first,

inverted and imitated, is the principal feature of the second section. The suite exists in two transcripts only, but the work itself is enough to tell us that only Bach could have written it.

VI. *Arrangements, Fragments, and Doubtful Works*

Suite in C minor

(*Bach-Gesellschaft*, xlv (i).)

The genuineness of this suite is vouched for by C. P. E. Bach; it is quite certainly a transcription from an unknown violin piece. The 'Preludio' has florid passages for the right hand over a bass part that has very little interest, but the 'Fuga' it introduces has many points of value, such as the 'answer' at once in inversion; the *da capo* direction at the end is, of course, most unusual in a piece definitely named a fugue. The suite seems to exist in more than one version, but by some strange oversight the critical apparatus is omitted from that part of the volume of the great edition in which this work occurs. In one version there are passages which are obviously beyond the power of a single performer on the keyboard, like the following:

The Sarabande has the same resemblance to the theme of the cradle song in the Christmas Oratorio which was noticed in the Sarabande of the first English Suite. The Gigue and its accompanying 'Double' are clearly from violin pieces. As no composition for the violin, either with or without accompaniment, exists among the works of Bach, from which this could have been a transcription, it would be well worth some clever violinist's while to restore it to its original use, and the process would not involve much adaptation, except here and there in the matter of compass.

Fragment of suite in A

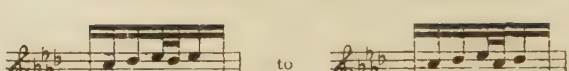
(*Bach-Gesellschaft*, xxxvi; Peters, 6,383; Bischoff, vii.)

These three little movements appear, but not in Bach's autograph, in the *Clavierbüchlein* for W. F. Bach, so that there is very good documentary evidence for their genuineness, although they are not on the level we might expect. The conventional Allemande is followed by a Courante (Corrente) which is very pretty though rather obvious, while the Gigue has little but the opening theme to recommend it.

Fragment of suite in F minor

(*Bach-Gesellschaft*, xxxvi; Peters, 2,838; Bischoff, vii.)

The authenticity of this little suite rests on the authority of Kellner, but the internal evidence is very strong for its genuineness. The second movement is headed 'Sarabande en Rondeau', but it is the first movement, a Prelude, which is in rondo form; there are four repetitions of the principal theme, which is of charmingly expressive quality. In bar 25 the *Bach-Gesellschaft* edition is no doubt right in correcting



to bring the passage into line with the following bars. The former passage occurs both in Peters and Bischoff, and it seems likely that the *Bach-Gesellschaft* volume appeared after Bischoff's edition was complete. The Sarabande is only in rondo form so far as it repeats the first section after the second. The Gigue has a rather persistent rhythm, and is of no great importance.

Suite in E

(*Bach-Gesellschaft*, xlii.)

This suite is a literal transcription from the third Partita for unaccompanied violin, and it is curious as illustrating Bach's fondness for the subject-matter of the first movement, for he uses it in the orchestral introduction to the 'Rathswahl' cantata, 'Wir danken dir, Gott', and there exists also a transcription for organ. The distaste which some highly educated musicians feel for transcriptions is, of course, due to the shoals of operatic and other arrangements from which the public has suffered from the days of William Babell down to those of Liszt; but such things as this and the suite last mentioned are surely worthy of the student's attention, more particularly as the characteristic devices for the violin succeed so well on the keyboard. The joyful Prelude has the alternations of 'piano' and 'forte' which tell us that a harpsichord with two manuals was meant to be used, and of course the 'echo' effects which abound are far more effective on the harpsichord than on the

violin. The second movement is a most graceful 'loure', that form of movement which occurred in the fifth French Suite. The spirited 'Gavotte en Rondeau' is as hilarious as the Prelude, and the two Minuets, if less important than the rest of the work, lead to a merry Bourrée, the fun of which is as strongly marked as usual. The final movement is a Gigue of great charm. The process of transcription seems to have consisted almost entirely in lowering the pitch by an octave, and adding the various ornaments which were considered indispensable in harpsichord music. The drawback to the effect of the suite is that the basses, which very often repeat the lowest note of the passages for the right hand, are mostly uninteresting. The public performance of this suite would be quite excusable until such time as the average violinist shall awake to the beauty of Bach's unaccompanied works for his instrument, and in this suite there are plenty of points which would be useful to the pianist as technical studies.

Suite (Partie) in A

(*Bach-Gesellschaft*, xlii.)

This composition exists in a manuscript in the Royal Library at Brussels. It begins with an Allemande of no special interest, and the showy 'Air pour les Trompettes' which follows it is one of those imitations of trumpet effects of which there are several among the English compositions of the time of Purcell. The Sarabande has full chords, and apart from some bold modulations in the last three bars, there is nothing to suggest Bach as the author. The Bourrée and Gigue are gay and pleasing, but there is none of Bach's imaginative power in either.

Allemande in C minor

(*Bach-Gesellschaft*, xlii.)

Spitta speaks of an 'Allemande and Gigue' in this key, but the *Bach-Gesellschaft* edition has nothing to say of any Gigue associated with this single movement, which looks like an exercise in long stretches for the hand. The musical ideas are not very striking, and the piece often halts for no particular reason.

Gigue in F minor

(*Bach-Gesellschaft*, xlii.)

It may be that this little piece was what Spitta was thinking of when he mentioned the 'pair' of pieces, as they are put together in a manuscript in the Berlin Library. It is a little more interesting than the Allemande.

Allemande and Courante in A

(*Bach-Gesellschaft*, xlii.)

These little pieces are in a manuscript belonging to J. Hauser; they are without composer's name, and there seems very little reason in assigning them to Bach, for they are quite unworthy of him.

Allemande in A minor

(*Bach-Gesellschaft*, xlii.)

This exists in a manuscript at Berlin, also without composer's name. It has a good deal more movement and interest than the other separate Allemandes referred to; its second part begins with an inversion of the theme, and it may very well be a genuine piece, rejected by the master in making up his suites.

Three Minuets

(*Bach-Gesellschaft*, xxxvi ; Peters, 4,558 ; Bischoff, vii.)

This is a charming little group of pieces, in G major, G minor, and G major respectively, which are clearly intended to be played in succession. The first appears by itself in Anna Magdalena's book of 1722. Five other minuets, unrelated to each other, are in her book of 1725.

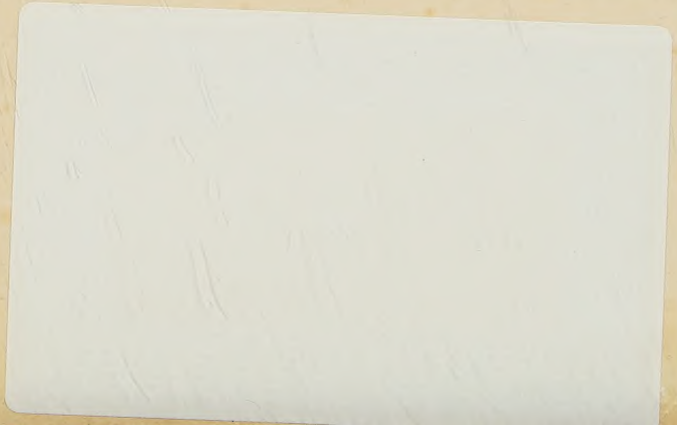
Suite in B flat

(*Bach-Gesellschaft*, xlii ; Peters, 6,383.)

It remains to speak of a work of great beauty, contained in the collection of Kellner often mentioned before. The Praeludium, or 'Einleitung' as it is called in the Peters edition, does not seem very interesting at first, but the various imitations and the handling of the subject are eloquent of Bach's authorship. The first figure of the theme is also important in the Allemande, from the second bar onwards, and this, too, is quite characteristic, although the monotonous bass in the fourth bar of the second section is not of itself convincing. The Courante (Corrente) is pleasing, and has a little Coda attached to it after repetition of its second section. The Sarabande, a very simple movement, is nevertheless constructed on an original plan, the imitations of the theme being quite unusual. There is no Gigue, but the close of the suite consists of an 'Echo' which vies in charm and humour with that of the E minor Partita. Like that, it requires a double harpsichord to do it justice, and on the modern piano the soft

pedal should be used to mark the contrasts between the phrases marked *forte* and *piano*. As a rule the echoes are in three parts, the main themes in four, and it is interesting to see how the harmonies are arranged so as to avoid any thinness in the echo. In the second half of the piece the echo makes bold to go on a way of its own, and at the close two bars, instead of one, are taken for the echo to repeat. After this a series of full chords marked 'Adagio' and 'Tutti' bring the whole to a very effective end. The latter word must surely mean that all the stops of the harpsichord are to be used in combination. If the piece is not by Bach there must have been another composer of his time with as strong a sense of humour as his own. In any case the Echo is well worth the attention of pianists in the present day.

Every music-lover must be amazed at the wealth of ideas, the power of imagination, and the technical mastery that distinguish the suites as a whole; and when we remember that they represent only one branch, and that a comparatively small one, of Bach's work, we may well feel amazed at the power and extent of his supreme genius.



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